

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01415 161615Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-05 NSCE-00
INRE-00 SSO-00 ACDA-12 IO-14 /081 W
-----008548 161639Z /23

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7122
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UNCLAS BEIRUT 1415

USIAC

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EO 11652: NA
SUBJ: BEIRUT PRESS ON ISRAELI ATTACK

1. FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY L'ORIENT LE JOUR PERHAPS
BEST SUMMED UP BEIRUT MEDIA SHOCK AT ISRAELI
ATTACK AGAINST LEBANON IN MARCH 16 BANNERLINE: "ONE-TENTH OF
LEBANON IS OCCUPIED." FRONT-PAGE PIX AND MULTIPLE-PAGE PHOTO
INSERTS IN MOST PAPERS EMPHASIZED EXTENT OF DAMAGE
TO CIVILIAN#TAGAD AND LOSS OF INNOCENT LIVES. ONE
CAPTION IN PRO-PALESTINIAN AL-LIWA SCREAMED:
"WHERE IS WORLD CONSCIENCE?"

2. LEFTIST AS-SAFIR HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTED "HEROIC
RESISTANCE WHICH CONFRONTED ISRAELI INVADERS", WHILE RIGHTIST
AL-AHRAR, ORGAN OF CHAMOUN'S PARTY, BANNERLINED:
"OCCUPATION OF DOZENS OF VILLAGES IN SOUTH AND BIKAA".

3. MOST PAPERS ACCURATELY REPORTED STATE DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMEN'S PRESS BRIEFING OF MARCH 15 AS WELL AS
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SECRETARY'S COMMENTS TO PRESS SAME DAY. AS-SAFIR, HOWEVER,
CARRIED AN AFP STORY ATTRIBUTING TO PLO INFORMATION CHIEF
STATEMENT THAT "ISRAELI AGGRESSION WAS LAUNCHED IN
COLLUSION WITH U.S. AIM OF OPERATION IS TO WEAKEN PALESTINIAN
RESISTANCE AND EMBARRASS SYRIA IN ORDER TO IMPOSE EGYPTIAN-
ISRAELI SETTLEMENT."

4. EDITORIALLY, PHALANGE PARTY ORGAN AL-AMAL ACCUSED PALESTINIANS OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ISRAELI ATTACK: "SINCE 1968 SAME PAINFUL TRAGEDY IS REPEATED. THOSE WHO THOUGHT SOUTH IS A WINNING CARD IN THEIR HANDS DISCOVERED THAT ISRAEL ALONE IS THE BIG WINNER. NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF SHTAWRA AGREEMENT CLEARLY SHOWS THAT PALESTINIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT LEBANON IS PAYING NOW."

5. PRO-LIBYA AS-SAFIR LAUDED "HEROIC RESISTANCE" OF PALESTINIANS: "PALESTINIAN AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT FIGHTERS HAVE HEROICALLY RESISTED ENEMY FORCES AND DEFENDED LEBANON'S LAND, SAME WAY THEY WOULD HAVE DEFENDED PALESTINE. WHEN A LEBANESE PARTY LEADER ACCUSES PALESTINIANS OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SOUTH, HE IS OBVIOUSLY PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH PRETEXT FOR ITS AGGRESSION."

MALIK

NOTE BY OC/T: (#) AS RECEIVED

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